AMENDMENTS TO THE SPECIFICATION:

Please replace paragraph [0009] with the following amended paragraph:

[0009] In an exemplary embodiment of the invention, a pothole protection mechanism is provided for a lift vehicle including a lifting section supported on a vehicle frame. The pothole protection mechanism includes an actuator attached to the lifting section of the lift vehicle, which actuator is displaced between an extended position and a retracted position based on a position of the lifting section. A crank including an engagement member at an upper end is positioned to be engaged by the actuator. The crank includes a slot between the upper end and a lower end. A connector secured to the vehicle frame and engaged with the crank through the slot movably secures the crank to the frame. A coupler link is pivotally secured at a first end to the lower end of the crank, and a pothole protection bar is pivotally secured to a second end of the coupler link and pivotally secured to the vehicle frame. The vehicle frame, the crank, the connector, the coupler link and the pothole protection bar define a five-bar mechanism for actuation of the pothole protection ~~bar~~mechanism.

Please replace paragraph [0010] with the following amended paragraph:

[0010] The pothole protection bar may be pivoted between a use position and a stowed position ~~via the five-bar mechanism~~ based on the position of the lifting section. The actuator may include a plate member slidably mounted on a pin rigidly secured to the frame, and a spring mounted on the pin between the frame and the plate member. In this context, a spring constant of the spring is preferably about 470 lb/in.

Please replace paragraph [0015] with the following amended paragraph:

[0015] In still another exemplary embodiment of the invention, a pothole protection mechanism is provided for a lift vehicle including a lifting section supported on a vehicle frame.

The pothole protection mechanism includes an extendable and retractable pothole protection bar and a five-bar mechanism for actuation of the pothole protection ~~bar~~mechanism based on a position of the lifting section.

Please replace paragraph [0021] with the following amended paragraph:

[0021] FIG. 1 is a perspective view of a scissor lift 10, which is exemplary for an aerial work platform vehicle suitable for the pothole protection mechanism of the present invention. The lift vehicle 10 generally includes a vehicle frame or chassis 12 on which a plurality of wheels 14 are mounted. The wheels 14 are typically driven by a suitable driving mechanism via controls positioned in the vicinity of a vehicle platform 16. The vehicle platform 16 is raised and lowered by a lifting section 18, shown as a scissor lift in FIG. 1, which lifting section 18 is supported on the vehicle frame 12. A pothole protection mechanism 20 is secured to the frame 12 generally within a perimeter defined by the vehicle wheels 14. The mechanism 20 is described with respect to one side only. Those of ordinary skill in the art will appreciate that the other side is a mirror copy.

Please replace paragraph [0026] with the following amended paragraph:

[0026] The described components, including the vehicle frame 12, the crank 34, the connector 40, the coupler link 42 and the pothole protection bar 22 define a five-bar mechanism to effect actuation of the pothole protection ~~bar~~mechanism. When the connector 40 is constructed utilizing a half-joint, enabling translation and rotation of the crank with respect to the chassis 12, the arrangement is deemed a modified five-bar mechanism. Generally, the half joint (pin in a slot) is the preferred choice for the present application; although for other applications with higher loads, a pinned or pivoted slider would be a preferred design.

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claim 15 without prejudice or disclaimer.

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A pothole protection mechanism for a lift vehicle including a lifting section supported on a vehicle frame, the pothole protection mechanism comprising:

an actuator attached to the lifting section of the lift vehicle, the actuator being displaced between an extended position and a retracted position based on a position of the lifting section;

a crank including an engagement member at an upper end positioned to be engaged by the actuator, the crank further including a slot between the upper end and a lower end, wherein a connector secured to the vehicle frame and engaged with the crank through the slot movably secures the crank to the vehicle frame;

a coupler link pivotally secured at a first end to the lower end of the crank; and

a pothole protection bar pivotally secured to a second end of the coupler link and pivotally secured to the vehicle frame,

wherein the vehicle frame, the crank, the connector, the coupler link and the pothole protection bar define a five-bar mechanism for actuation of the pothole protection ~~bar~~mechanism.

2. (Currently Amended) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the pothole protection bar is pivoted between a use position and a stowed position ~~via the five-bar mechanism~~ based on the position of the lifting section.

3. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the actuator comprises:

a plate member slidably mounted on a pin rigidly secured to the frame; and

a spring mounted on the pin between the frame and the plate member.

4. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 3, wherein a spring constant of the spring is about 470 lb/in.

5. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the connector is structurally configured to allow only for translation of the crank with respect to the connector.

6. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 5, wherein the slot is at a predetermined angle with respect to a longitudinal axis of the crank.

7. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 6, wherein the slot is offset with respect to the longitudinal axis of the crank.

8. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the connector is structurally configured only for translation and rotation of the crank with respect to the connector.

9. (Currently Amended) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, wherein the pothole protection bar is pivoted through an arc substantially limited to 90° between a use position and a stowed position ~~via the five-bar mechanism~~ based on the position of the lifting section.

10. (Original) A pothole protection mechanism according to claim 1, further comprising a frame pin coupled to the vehicle frame, the frame pin serving as a stop for the crank.

11. (Currently Amended) A lift vehicle comprising:

a vehicle frame;

a lifting section supported on the vehicle frame; and

a pothole protection mechanism, the pothole protection mechanism comprising:

an actuator attached to the lifting section of the lift vehicle, the actuator being displaced between an extended position and a retracted position based on a position of the lifting section,

a crank including an engagement member at an upper end positioned to be engaged by the actuator, the crank further including a slot between the upper end and a lower end, wherein a connector secured to the vehicle frame and engaged with the crank through the slot movably secures the crank to the vehicle frame,

a coupler link pivotally secured at a first end to the lower end of the crank, and

a pothole protection bar pivotally secured to a second end of the coupler link and pivotally secured to the vehicle frame,

wherein the vehicle frame, the crank, the connector, the coupler link and the pothole protection bar define a five-bar mechanism for actuation of the pothole protection ~~bar~~mechanism.

12. (Original) A lift vehicle according to claim 9, wherein the lifting section comprises a scissors lift.

13. (Original) A lift vehicle according to claim 11, wherein the actuator comprises:

a plate member slidably mounted on a pin rigidly secured to the frame; and

a spring mounted on the pin between the frame and the plate member.

14. (Original) A lift vehicle according to claim 13, wherein a spring constant of the spring is about 470 lb/in.

15. (Canceled)

16. (Currently Amended) A pothole protection mechanism for a lift vehicle including a lifting section supported on a vehicle frame, the pothole protection mechanism comprising:

an actuator attached to the lifting section of the lift vehicle, the actuator being displaced between an extended position and a retracted position based on a position of the lifting section;

a crank including an engagement member at an upper end positioned to be engaged by the actuator, the crank further including a slot between the upper end and a lower end, wherein a connector secured to the vehicle frame and engaged with the crank through the slot movably secures the crank to the vehicle frame;

a coupler link pivotally secured at a first end to the lower end of the crank; and

_____a pothole protection bar pivotally secured to a second end of the coupler link and pivotally secured to the vehicle frame.